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Letter dated 25 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In the past few weeks, the Government of Ethiopia has issued a series of belligerent and reckless statements proclaiming its intention to carry out "military action" to "oust the regime in Eritrea". Ethiopia's Prime Minister, speaking in serialized interviews broadcast on Ethiopian media, announced that his government will ratchet up its "diplomatic and military endeavours to oust the regime in Eritrea". On 19 March, he addressed the Ethiopian defence Command and Staff College and revealed that he will increase military spending to deal with enemy threats, in a clear reference to Eritrea. Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry has also been beating the war drums, openly calling for military action against Eritrea and undertaking a lobbying campaign in New York and elsewhere.

Leaving aside the underlying motivations and/or capabilities of Ethiopia to carry out this threat, I would like to draw your attention to the following salient points:

1. The open threat to resort to force against a State Member of the United Nations is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and should be strongly condemned by the Security Council.

2. Ethiopia continues to occupy the town of Badme and other sovereign Eritrean territories in violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States. Ethiopia's flagrant acts are further in breach of Article 33(1) of the Charter on the peaceful resolution of disputes as they contravene the Algiers Peace Agreement and the final and binding decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission. Ethiopia cannot therefore "play the victim" and invoke Article 51 of the Charter to "exercise its right of self-defence" against the very country on which it has committed an act of aggression in violation of the Charter and international law.

3. Furthermore, in the past 10 years, Ethiopia has been pursuing, without let up, an active policy of subversion and hostility against Eritrea under the rubric of "regime change". In this regard, the recent naked threat by Ethiopia's Prime Minister, and the audacious public admission, for the umpteenth time, of his government's support to "Eritrean armed groups" have no novelty in themselves and only accentuate its prevalent policies of unwarranted belligerence and regional destabilization. Eritrea had not

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seen fit in the past to file complaints to the Security Council regarding the numerous acts of subversion and terrorism. because it chose to draw the undivided attention of the Security Council to the larger issue of Ethiopia's occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories. But these are well documented and will be submitted at the appropriate time.

4. As you will recall, the Security Council had unjustifiably imposed, in December 2009, a number of sanctions against Eritrea that included an arms embargo. As Eritrea emphasized at the time (S/2009/658), those unwarranted and unbalanced measures, and particularly the lopsided arms embargo, were fraught with dangerous consequences for regional peace and stability as they could potentially encourage Ethiopia to contemplate reckless acts of further aggression and subversion against Eritrea. If Ethiopia's current sabre-rattling is a precursor of this eventuality, the Security Council will have to shoulder the blame and responsibility for what might ultimately transpire in our region.

5. Contrary to the assertions made by Ethiopia's Prime Minister and other Ethiopian officials in their recent statements, Eritrea does not have a policy of destabilizing Ethiopia, or any other neighbouring State. Eritrea has repeatedly stated that it is prepared for full normalization as soon as Ethiopia accepts its international treaty obligations and withdraws from sovereign Eritrean territory. The Ethiopian war campaign against Eritrea and its purported readiness "for military action" is thus not prompted by Eritrea's misconduct. To the contrary, it only amplifies Ethiopia's prevalent regional agenda. The actual timing may also have to do with the regime's desire to divert the attention of the people of Ethiopia and the international community from the simmering internal political crisis that is besetting the country.

6. Stressing the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes between States and adherence to the rule of law, I wish to reiterate Eritrea's call on the Security Council to uphold the demarcation decisions of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission — as indeed it is obligated to do in accordance with the provisions of the Algiers Agreement and the Charter of the United Nations — and to ensure the swift withdrawal of Ethiopia from the occupied sovereign Eritrean territories. I also urge members of the Security Council to urgently deal with Ethiopia's reckless threat to use force against Eritrea in a manner that is consistent with the Charter and the practices of the Security Council in similar situations.

I should be most grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative